



Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: March 8, 2023

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes.

1. Administration.

Members in Attendance: John Aslanian, Beth Benedikt, Wayne Chouinard (DPW), Lenard Diggins, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Tycho Nightingale, Scott Smith, James Stubbe, Laura Swan (Chair), and Shoji Takahashi.

Members Absent: Corey Rateau (APD).

Members of Public in Attendance: Paul Easton, Linda Epstein, Ryan Katofsky, Elizabeth Macheck, Shawna Marquis, Laila Niles, Matthew Owen, Jo Anne Preston, Heidi Rosenberg, Paul Schlichtman, Petru Sofio, Joseph Solomon, James Sultan, and Chris van Voorhies.

The Chair provided notice regarding Remotely Conducted Meetings, referring the members to the agenda attachment entitled “Governor Charles Baker’s 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law”. The Chair reviewed the meeting ground rules and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

Len Diggins informed TAC that the Massachusetts House voted to extend remotely conducted meetings through March, 2025. The Senate likely is to permit remote meetings but has not yet voted.

B. Approval of February 8, 2023 Meeting Notes.

Minutes for the Meeting of February 8, 2023, were approved, subject to adding the clarifying points by Bill Copithorne of DPW.

C. Update on Membership

Jim Stubbe was sworn in to fill the position of Associate Member at-large.

D. Correspondence sent/received between December 10 and January 6, 2022.

1. “Traffic Concerns on Gray St,” Letter from the Select Board to TAC, 02/07/23.
2. “Concerns on Gray St,” Letter from the Select Board to TAC, 02/28/23.

Laura Swan received notes from Corey Rateau regarding a study by TAC from 2013 – 2014 for crosswalk placement across Gray St near Valley Rd. Insufficient number of students were crossing at Valley Rd at that time. TAC will consider revisiting the count.

APD had seven directed patrols for vehicle speeding since January, 2023, on Gray St between Valley Rd and Scituate St. APD will take traffic measurements in May, 2023. The previous measurements were from 2011.

3. “Concerns: Intersection Improvement at Churchill Ave, Endicott Rd and Gloucester St,” Letter from the Select Board to TAC, 02/28/23.

A group of neighbors near this intersection proposed a narrowing and realignment of the roadway to enhance safety. Wayne Chouinard will examine their proposal and consider road narrowing and curb extensions to change the skew angles of the intersection, which permit higher vehicle speeds.

4. “Herbert and Magnolia Field Curb Extension Plan,” DPW to TAC, 02/08/23.
5. “Oakland-Wachusett-Prospect Options A-B-C,” DPW to TAC, 02/08/23.
6. “Warren St. Traffic Calming...” DPW to TAC, 02/08/23.
7. “Proposed Crosswalk at Summer St and Sunset Rd” and attached diagrams, DPW to TAC, 02/23/23.

2. Public Comments (for information only, not for action).

Jo Anne Preston, who is a Precinct 5 Town Meeting Member and AHA Commissioner, requested an update on the progress of Chestnut St and reasons for the delay.

Paul Schlichtman requested the Stantec plans on the Chestnut St reconstruction at the February TAC Meeting, and he has yet to receive them. The Town should publish the plans and include a timeline for construction. He noted that certain funding for the project expires at the end of 2023.

3. Town Issues/Activities (not already on the agenda).

A. Update from the Department of Public Works (DPW).

Chestnut St. Wayne Chouinard (DPW) addressed the points raised by Jo Anne Preston and Paul Schlichtman. He received the Stantec plans last month and is working with the Town's existing contractor for road rehabilitation and drainage, DNR Contracting, to start construction around April 15. The project will be the first of the construction season and will be completed this season.

RRFBs and pavement markings are included, which will be under a separate bid. Pavement markings will be placed 2 – 3 weeks after the final paving.

The Stantec plans will be posted to the DPW website, and the Town will reach out to abutters.

Scott Smith asked about bike accommodations past Medford St. Wayne Chouinard responded that he has not heard any information. He will follow up as a survey was conducted by DPCD last year.

Mass Ave and Appleton St Project is being determined through the Design Review Committee. The MBTA needs to modify the bus stop and is awaiting the design plan from Stantec.

B. There was no update from the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD).

C. There was no update from the Police Department (APD).

4. Discussion: Summer St/Sunset Rd Crosswalk

DPW examined the Summer St and Sunset Rd intersection for the placement of a crosswalk across Summer St. The crosswalk was recommended by TAC in October, 2022, and approved by the Select Board.

Wayne Chouinard noted challenges in placing a crosswalk at the southwest corner of the intersection by 534 Summer St, such as the nearby residential driveway, fire hydrant, and catch basin. To try to address these challenges, he presented designs of varying curb radii of 10', 15', and 25'. Tightening the turn permits better placement for a tactile plate and improved sightlines for a pedestrian crossing to the north. However, trucks such as a fire truck pumper or trash truck cannot make a 10' radius. The location will have pedestrian warning signs as Summer St is a busy roadway.

Wayne Chouinard recommended a site visit for TAC Members and abutters. DPW painted markings for a 15' radius for people to understand how a crosswalk at that location would work.

Ryan Katofsky of 534 Summer St asked to meet with DPW before a plan is finalized.

Matthew Owen of Forest St asked whether a midblock crossing (closer to Newland Rd) would be a better location for a crosswalk. He did not want to compromise on accessibility with a poorly placed tactile plate due to the present geometry challenges. Wayne Chouinard responded that a midblock crossing is more of a surprise for drivers and might create other problems.

Paul Easton of Sunset Rd, who sent the original request for a crosswalk to the Select Board. He noted that a Summer St crosswalk somewhere between Sunset St and Newland Rd is strongly supported by residents in the area.

5. Discussion: Herbert and Magnolia

TAC received resident complaints of motor vehicles speeding on Herbert Rd near Magnolia Park. DPW is proposing enhancements of the existing crosswalk to include curb bump outs. The Town has a \$40,000 grant to build this crosswalk enhancement.

The bump outs narrow the roadway and provide visual cues to enhance pedestrian safety and traffic calming. The rain-garden component will be similar to the ones on Herbert Rd at Egerton Rd and Milton St, providing storm water improvements to promote water quality.

Laura Swan noted the beautiful street trees on Herbert Rd can impede sightlines and shade the crosswalk to reduce visibility. Wayne Chouinard responded that DPW will evaluate the lighting from the street light over the crosswalk and will coordinate with the Tree Warden on trimming to ensure proper illumination.

Jeff Maxtutis praised the project and asked DPW to consider adding retroreflective material on the posts for the pedestrian signs to enhance visibility. Wayne Chouinard responded that DPW is working on safety standards for pedestrian-crossing infrastructure. Paul Schlichtman also praised the rain garden proposal, adding that the Town is known for rain-garden infrastructure.

6. Discussion: Oakland/Wachusett/Prospect

Wayne Chouinard pointed out that Oakland Ave between Park Ave and Wachusett Ave is very wide. DPW is proposing a road diet to narrow the roadway to 27'. The pedestrian experience will be improved with curb ramps and bump

outs. Snow removal team asked DPW to limit curb extensions on two corners to help clear the intersection of snow.

A sizeable island will be installed to reduce the ~100' crossing distance of Wachusett Ave at the intersection of Oakland Ave and Prospect Ave. Oakland Ave is stop controlled; Wachusett Ave is not.

The Town is working with the MBTA on bus stop improvements, and the Town wants to promote the use of the bus stop at this intersection.

Jeff Maxtutis said the present intersection is too big and feels dangerous. Oakland Ave needs sidewalks leading to Park Ave, and sidewalks should be extended by DPW as far as possible.

Elizabeth Macheck of Oakland Ave uses the bus stop at this intersection. The present conditions are dangerous for crossing, and she supports the project and extending the sidewalks. She noted that the crossing at Wachusett Ave is sight limited.

Heidi Rosenberg of Wachusett Ave supports the project, noting that children walk to the nearby Dallin School. She observed that Oakland Ave traffic heading towards Park Ave rolls through the stop sign. Sight lines are challenging as there is a large house being constructed at 185 Wachusett Ave.

Chris van Voorhies of Wachusett Ave agreed with others that the intersection is dangerous. He encourages a four-way stop and asks TAC to revisit crash data to reassess whether it is warranted for this location. Jeff Maxtutis responded that warrants for a four-way stop also include other factors and would require traffic counts.

Joseph Solomon suggested curb extensions at each corner to slow traffic if a four-way stop was not possible. He liked the idea of a pocket park at the intersection as open space and asked about the inclusion of the cut-through from Prospect Ave to Oakland Ave. Wayne Chouinard responded that the draft is to prompt discussion with the community. He has had discussions with the AFD about a mountable curb with pushback from abutters.

Laura Swan concluded that she also received emails in support of the project from other residents. She will forward the support emails to DPW.

7. Discussion: Warren St Traffic Calming

River St and Medford St were recently repaved. Warren St will be repaved soon. Wayne Chouinard showed a map highlighting intersections without curb ramps, which will be installed. Curb extensions are proposed for installation at Webster St and Park St for traffic calming.

Warren St and Webster St is a wide intersection. The curb extension will reduce the present ~50' crossing to ~25'. The intersection will be squared up to reduce the skew and plantings will be added. Notably, the proposed curb extensions at Park St will not reduce parking spots.

Scott Smith, who lives nearby, said that Warren St needs help and asked DPW to consider two points:

(A) Consider intersections having higher crash incidence for traffic calming. In the past few years the following intersections with Warren St and number of crashes: Wyman St (7), Rawson Rd (5), River St (5), Medford St (5), and Palmer St (4).

(B) Warren St is a significant bicycle route with fairly low overall parking occupancy. Consider 14' centerline to curb extension to facilitate bikes and motor vehicles sharing the road when parked cars are not present.

John Aslanian agreed with a less aggressive approach on curb extensions to facilitate bicycle movement. He also asked DPW to consider Rawson Rd for changes.

Petri Sofio added that the School Committee is concerned about students crossing Warren St at Rawson Rd. He noted that Connect Arlington designates an on-street bike lane for Warren St, and Warren St is an important corridor for bike infrastructure. He asked if curb extensions would limit plans for a cycle track in the future.

Wayne Chouinard responded that he will evaluate Warren St and Rawson Rd. He added that curb extensions may slow vehicular traffic on Warren St. Connect Arlington is a guide for the Town, which will need to weigh the needs of different constituents.

8. Update: Gibbs School/Rawson Rd

Scott Smith made three suggestions to improve the intersection at Rawson Rd and Broadway. (1) Paint crosswalk lines on the northside of Broadway by Fenway Market. (2) Per a suggestion by Corey Rateau of APD, install No Parking signs on Rawson Rd at Fenway Market. (3) Broadway and Foster St (which becomes Rawson Rd on the northside of Broadway) is wide. He asked if DPW can narrow the crossing. Wayne Chouinard responded that he will evaluate the intersection.

Foster St south of Gibbs School intersects with Mass Ave. Laura Swan spoke with the Traffic Supervisor at Mass Ave and Foster St. The Traffic Supervisor said there is orderly crossing of Gibbs students, and he does not think it is necessary to have a school zone on Mass Ave in the vicinity.

9. Update: Downing Square Signage

Melissa Laube provided crash statistics at Downing Square.

During the pandemic between January, 2020, and March, 2023, there were eight crashes with six resulting in property damage, and two with non-fatal injuries. Between 2016 – 2019, there were eleven crashes with six resulting in property damage, one non-fatal injury, and three severe injuries. Prior to the 2013 improvements, between 2010 – 2013, there were seventeen crashes.

Next month, the Working Group will provide a Memo of its recommendations.

Wayne Chouinard added that the flashing yellow beacon at Downing Square is being evaluated. He thinks the battery needs to-be replaced.

10. Update: Wachusett Ave and Appleton St

Jim Stubbe and Jeff Maxtutis observed traffic at the intersection for ~1 hour. There were two crashes in 2017. Over a 20-year period, only four crashes at this intersection.

The Working Group is looking at alternatives such as squaring the intersection, installing a stop sign for eastbound traffic on Appleton St, or installing a roundabout. Traffic counts and turning movements data might be helpful.

Linda Epstein lives near the intersection and takes the bus at night. She agrees that a roundabout might be a good alternative. She said that it is a dark intersection and does not trust drivers to stop.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm.